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A Disturber of the Peace.

At the meeting of anti-slavery Ministers & Members of Congregational churches in this city the last week, one S. S. Foster, an abolitionist of the Garrison ~~school~~ school, & a disturber of the peace of the Abby-Folsom school, claimed the right to speak, as a member, & created considerable disturbance. The facts, ~~in the case we learn~~, were as follows.

As the business of the Convention was quietly proceeding in the morning, two females of that school were present, & making their remarks one to the other about the Convention. At length one says to the other, as if a happy thought had struck her. Where is S. S. Foster; I wish he was here; if we could only get him to talking here, he would break them up in half an hour. So he would, responded the other; & straitway they beckoned to a male- (not a man) ~~acquaintance~~ of their acquaintance, & on his coming to them, they repeated the suggestion, ~~to him~~, & requested him to go & look up Foster & bring him in, & off he started on his errand. Foster was soon there & asked if he had a right to speak in the meeting. The moderator, Dr Osgood, directed the call to be read. Foster decided that under the call he had a right. He was soon called to order, & the question of his right was raised. It appeared that he was once a member of the church in Dartmouth College; that he had withdrawn from, & disowned the church, after the Garrison style; that the church had excommunicated him, but having done it without the formality of a trial, recently rescinded their action, in order to proceed regularly in the case. On this technical standing, though himself renouncing all church organizations as such, & denouncing & excommunicating that church in particular, he claimed the right to speak & act as a member of the Convention. When asked if he really regarded himself as a member of a Congregational Church in good standing,

he dishonestly evaded the question - saying that he was entitled to all the rights & privileges of a member - & insisted on his right to speak. The moderator decided he had no such right & called him to order. He appealed to the Convention, & the Convention sustained the Chair. Mr Foster was then quiet. But on the opening of the Convention in the afternoon, he again appeared, & claimed his right as a member - saying that he had as good a right to membership in that body, as any one present; that whenever, in any body, the majority, by their acts, trample on the rights of the minority, it is the duty of that minority to assert & defend those rights, just when & where they are invaded, & that he therefore should assert his right, & claim the floor until the Convention yielded him his right, & gave him a hearing. Again the Moderator called him to order, but to no purpose. On he went. Individual friends besought him to desist, & every effort, that kindness or ingenuity could devise, was resorted to, but in vain. At length, after he had kept the Convention in confusion something like an hour, & it became perfectly manifest that nothing else would effect the object, two police officers were called, & he was taken from the hall. They were instructed, on getting him out of the hall to let him go, provided he would not return to disturb the meeting. He would do no such thing, & they accordingly took him to Leverett Street jail. The next morning he was released, no complaint having been offered, or criminal prosecution commenced commenced - the only object being to protect the meeting from interruption.

We are the more particular in this case, because the fact of his arrest was no sooner known at the Garrison Anti-Slavery Convention, in the Chardon Street chapel, than they took it up as a case of outrageous persecution, & dealt out their plaudits of him as a martyr, & their denunciations of the Convention & the clergy, in liberal measures - Such men as George Bradburn, Wendell Phillips, Edmund Quincy &c. joining in the disgraceful work. They spent the whole afternoon & evening upon it; & the next day, when Foster, on his liberation, entered their meeting, he was received with the most boisterous shouts of applause. That party ~~The~~ have thus fairly espoused his cause, & become endorsers for his conduct. It is important the Christian public understand this, & the more so, as this same Foster is in the

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habit of going into religious meetings on the Sabbath, & interrupting the preacher & disturbing the services in the same way. He recently did so at Nashua, & succeeded in breaking up the meeting & then published an account of it, glorying in it as the "breaking up of a habitation of devils." He was on that occasion, arested, imprisoned & fined. He recently attempted a similar disturbance in Exeter, & has done the same in other places. He has given out that he means to do the same in this city, about a month hence.

As the old Quaker annoyances of the religious assemblies of the Puritans are coming back again, it will not be amiss to publish a statements or two in respect to them. These statements, in connexion with the Abby Folsom developments, will cast some important light upon the changes, so often, & sometimes so senselessly rung upon the persecutions of the poor Quakers. by the, so called, bigoted Puritans. ~~They will show, that, abating the severity of the punishments~~ inflicted on the wanton disturbers of their peace, the Puritans were less the sinning than the sinned against. I suspect, with all our holy horror of Puritanical intolerance, if men or women were to walk naked into our religious assemblies upon the Sabbath, "for a sign", we should call in the aid of the magistracy, & send them ~~without ceremony~~ to Leverett Street jail, or some mad-house for safe-keeping, without much ceremony. ~~I should be sorry for our good sense if we did not.~~

~~To the Statements~~. The first is from George Fox's own account of himself. He says,

sold "As I went toward Nottingham on a first-day, (Sabbath) in the morning, with friends to a meeting there, when I came on the top of the hill in sight of the town, I espied the great steeple-house; & the Lord said unto me, 'Thou must go cry against yonder great idol, & against the worshippers therein.' I said nothing of this

to the friends, but went with them to the meeting, where the mighty power of the Lord God was amongst us; in which I left friends sitting in the meeting, & went to the steeple-house," (his usual designation of other places of religious worship). "When I came there, all the people looked like fallow ground, & the priest, like a great lump of Earth," (his usual style of speaking of all regular ministers) "stood in his pulpit above. He took for his text, these words of Peter, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed &c.' He told the people this was the scriptures, by which they were to try all doctrines, religions & opinions. Now the Lord's power was so mighty upon me, & so strong in me that I could not hold; but was made to cry out, ~~[illegible]~~ "O no; it is not the scriptures" ~~[illegible]~~ Then giving an account of what he said further, he adds, "As I thus spoke amongst them", (interrupting the minister & distracting the meeting of course), "the officers came, took me away & put me into a nasty stinking ~~[illegible]~~ prison; the smell whereof got so into my nose & throat that it very much annoyed me."

And this is but a feeble specimen of what "the man in leathern breeches," as he used exultingly to style himself, was wont to do in the way of disturbing the religious assemblies of others. What his followers & fellow-religionists were in the habit of doing, both in the old world & the new, may be seen in the following note from Cox on Quakerism p.p. 678, 679.

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"In New England, says Cotton Mather in his "Magnalia," the Quakers were punished, "non qua errones, sed qua turbones" – for what they did, not what they taught; by the magistracy: & among other offences of intolerable abomination, which they practised against the peace & decency of the commonwealth, the pious nudity of females, like the naked goddess of Reason worshipped in revolutionary France, or the miserable Lupercalians of Rome, was conspicuous. Mather justly condemns their capital punishment by the civil authorities; though the instances were few, & in circumstances of provocation singularly high; but insists on their tumultuary proceedings, and inspired obstinacy in crying against all authority of the laws, as deserving & absolutely requiring the intervention of the magistrates. "I would also entreat the world," says that excellent & learned man, "that they would not be too ready to receive all the stories told by the Quakers about their New England persecution; because the Quakers have in print complained of such an one upon two women of their sect, who came stark naked as ever they were born into our public assemblies, & they were, (baggages that they were) adjuged unto the whipping-post, for that piece of devilism". The same scene was acted, with equal inspiration, (as Mosheim & other writers also assent,) in Old England, how often I know not; For himself (and all Friends have to sanction & must defend it) being the underwriter of the history. He charges it all on the agency of God, who, he says, inspired it! These are his words: The Lord made one to go naked among you, a figure [redacted] of thy nakedness, & of your nakedness, & as a sign amongst you, before your destruction cometh; that you might see you were naked & not covered, with the truth". I have no doubt that all this belongs legitimately to the 'orthodox' system, & may result from it again. Such things, generally such, that is, grotesque symbolical actions &

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"figures" made each "for a sign" in some conspicuous place or august presence, were common among them in the seventeenth century. Many more specimens might be given, & many authors quoted. I have reason to think that the spectacle of naked females, to be piously looked at "for a sign" was often repeated, & in a sort familiarized, in the old country, before "that piece of devilism" was repeated in the new. Says Fox, "Some have been moved ~~to run naked~~ to go naked in their streets. in the other powers days, (meaning Cromwell's), & since, (i.e. it was all along common in the days of either power) as signs of their nakedness; & have declared amongst them, That God would strip them of their hypocritical professions & make them as bare & naked as they were." But instead of considering it, they have frequently whipped, or otherwise abused them." Terrible magistrates these! Where was their charity, their faith, their regard for tender consciences, or their respect for inspired actions & the fair sex?"

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Thus far Coy. These, & similar statements that might be quoted at almost any length, will show, I think, that, abating the severity of the punishments sometimes inflicted on these ~~wanton~~ wanton disturbers of their peace, the Puritans were less the sinning than the sinned against. I suspect, with all our holy horror of Puritanical intolerance, falsely so called, if men, & women were to walk "stark naked" into our religious assemblies on the sabbath, "for a sign", we should not hesitate long about calling in the magistracy, ~~& sending~~ & sending them to Leverett Street jail, or some convenient mad-house for safe keeping. At least, I should be sorry for our lack of ~~good~~ common good sense & decency if we did.

No Fanatic.